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LINES TO GEORGE F. KENNAN

Suggested by his verses on a peculiar fate

Our thanks for words of balm, old Overseer,
Who bore the lion's portion of the woes
In earlier phases of our joint career
Planning frustration of the Nation's foes.
They bring us light for every vexing day's
Blind search for wisdom's path amid the gloom
And ease the stress along the arduous ways
That wind so thin 'twixt paradise and doom.
Perpetual peace and brotherhood of man
Withdrawing toward the limbo of lost dreams,
What ends remain for which to strive and plan,
What goals by which to justify our schemes?
If grace of angels lies beyond our scope,
The apiary's discipline is our hope.

Your words bespeak compassion learned in hives.
You know the cruel denial of romance
To honeybees that labor all their lives,
With ecstacy the brief reward of chance.
Imploring heaven for a parturition
Of progeny to justify your pride,
We'll do our best to fill the moment's mission,
Should fortune make the White Queen Bee our bride.
Meanwhile to duller bees we'll give our heed;
The myriad busy insects of routine
Buzzing in our collective bonnet need
Our care. Not every bee can be a queen.
What passion spurs? Not love of fame or money.
Nor love of love itself. Just love of honey.

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C. B. Marshall
September 25, 1950